

4.14 Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

The Council on Environmental Quality's NEPA Guidelines (40 CFR 1502.16) requires the discussion of any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved with the proposed action or alternatives.

The majority of the environmental effects that would be generated by the proposed action and alternatives are reversible. Construction activities will result in short-term, temporary effects on lands and resources. The duration of the majority of the effects will occur only during construction, a period expected to be no longer than 70 days. Mitigation measures have been identified to ensure that lands and resources affected by construction of the action or alternatives are returned to their pre-construction condition, thereby reversing the effects.

Construction of the action and alternatives will result in the consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels for the transportation of equipment, construction materials, and personnel. Construction of the action and alternatives will also result in the use of steel, concrete, and other non-renewable construction materials. The use of those materials is considered a use of irretrievable resources, although those materials can be recycled for subsequent use. The commitment of these resources would be relatively small, short-term (construction only) and focused toward a specific goal.

The action and alternatives will utilize waters produced from geothermal resources. Those waters will be discharged into the Pit River after their use. This is considered an irreversible commitment of resources. The level of withdrawal from the geothermal resource (approximately 40 gpm) is relatively low compared to the potential production from the geothermal resource and therefore is not considered a significant effect on the resource.

